

Iowa Child Restraint Law Guide*

(Iowa Code 321.446)

*** This is only a guide. Please refer to the Code section for full details.**

Key Points:

- Children under three must be in approved safety seat.
- Children ages three to six must be in an approved safety seat or a seat belt.
- Applies to all seating positions in vehicle.
- Driver is responsible for fine.
- Misdemeanor fine is \$25, plus costs (non-moving violation).
- Applies to both residents and nonresidents of Iowa.
- Safety seats must be used according to manufacturer's instructions.
- Child must be secured in seat and safety seat must be secure to the vehicle.
- Safety seats must meet federal motor vehicle safety standards.
- Non-use is probable cause to stop vehicle.
- An officer may investigate a suspected violation.
- Judge may dismiss first-offense citation IF the driver proves an approved safety seat has been acquired.

Exceptions:

- Children certified by a physician or osteopathic physician as having a medical, physical or mental disability making restraint use inadvisable.
- Passengers on a school bus.
- Passengers on a bus.
- Children riding on motorcycles.
- Children riding in vehicles manufactured before 1966.
- Children being transported in authorized emergency vehicles.
- Children transported by peace officer on official duty.
- Children riding in motor homes except if riding in the front passenger seat (where they must be restrained)

Iowa Seat Belt Law Guide*

(Iowa Code 321.445)

*** This is only a guide. Please refer to the Code section for full details.**

Key Points:

- Applies to all front seat occupants.
- Vehicle must be in forward motion.
- Applies to both Iowa and out-of-state vehicles.
- Belt systems must be used properly:
belt across lap, not stomach
strap over shoulder, not under arm.
- Belts must be present:
as provided by manufacturer;
not removed or disconnected.
- Failure to use is probable cause to stop a vehicle:
an officer may investigate a suspected violation.
- Driver and passengers may be cited separately.
misdemeanor fine is \$25 plus costs;
conviction is logged on driver's record but does not count toward license suspension.

Exceptions:

- Motor vehicles manufactured before 1966.
- Vehicles being used by people for work requiring them to get in and out of vehicle frequently, provided they don't exceed 25 MPH between stops.
- Rural letter carriers making deliveries.
- Passengers on a bus.
- People with a DOT-exemption form signed by doctor stating reason for non-use and expiration date.
- Passengers (not drivers) in emergency vehicles during an emergency trip.
- Vans, trucks, buses and multi-purpose vehicles manufactured before 1972.
- People in the front seat of motor vehicles primarily used by handicapped people who utilize collapsible wheelchairs.